

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CU-02 /022 W
-----101036Z 122475 /13

R 100832Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4081
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCNAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BRAEMEN
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AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, GE, AU
SUBJECT: GDR AUTHOR REINER KUNZE IN AUSTRIA TO RECEIVE
LITERARY PRIZE

REF: 76 BERLIN 7136 (NOTAL)

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1. AUSTRIAN EMBOFF HAS CONFIRMED STORY PICKED UP
IN WEST BERLIN THAT REINER KUNZE, LOCALLY WELL-
KNOWN AUTHOR AND CRITIC OF THE GDR REGIME, RECEIVED
PERMISSION OT VISIT ANS IS IN FACT IN AUSTRIA IN
CONNECTION WITH RECEIVING LITERARY PRIZE IN SALZBURG.
ACCORDING TO THIS INFORMATION, KUNZE LEFT THE GDR IN
EARLY FEBRUARY ANS IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN ABOUT

FEBRUARY 11. OUR EARLIER INFORMATION SUGGESTED KUNZE MIGHT STAY AS LONG AS TWO WEEKS IN AUSTRIA BUT THIS APPEARS NOT TO BE THE CASE.

2. PRIZE WHICH KUNZE RECEIVED IS AWARDED ANNUALLY BY THE MAYOR OF SALZBURG IN HONOR OF 19TH CENTURY AUSTRIAN WRITER, TRAKL. OTHER AWARD WINNER THIS YEAR WAS AUSTRIAN WOMAN WRITER, ACCORDING TO AUSTRIAN EMBOFF. APPARENTLY, AUSTRIAN EMBASSY IN EAST BERLIN COORDINATED REPLY TO LETTER FROM SALZBURG TO GDR AUTHORITIES REGARDING AWARD OF PRIZE TO KUNZE BUT DID NOT ENTER INTO ARRANGEMENTS OTHERWISE. AUSTRIAN EMBOFF SAYS HIS GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED MATTER TO BE PRIVATE ALTHOUGH AUSTRIAN MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES WERE INVOLVED.

3. ASKED WHY HE BELIEVED THE GDR AUTHORITIES ALLOWED KUNZE TO LEAVE THE GDR, AUSTRIAN EMBOFF SPECULATED THAT GDR WAS MOTIVATED BY DESIRE TO PRODUCE GOOD ATMOSPHERE PRIOR TO NEGOTIATION OF GDR/AUSTRIAN CULTURAL AGREEMENT SCHEDULED TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 21. AUSTRIAN EMBOFF ADDED HE HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE KUNZE WOULD NOT RETURN TO GDR AS PLANNED. HE ALSO STATED THAT PERMISSION FOR KUNZE TO VISIT AUSTRIA HAD COME THROUGH GDR CULTURAL MINISTER HOFFMAN.

4. COMMENT: KUNZE IS WELL-KNOWN IN BOTH EAST AND WEST GERMANY FOR HIS ANTI-GDR REGIME WRITINGS. ON OCTOBER 29, SHORTLY BEFORE THE BIERMANN AFFAIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN NOVEMBER, 1976 (REFTEL) HE WAS EXPELLED FROM THE GDR WRITER'S UNION. ACCORDING TO GDR CHURCH SOURCES, KUNZE HAS APPEARED AT SEVERAL CHURCH CONCERTS IN THE GDR SINCE HIS EXPULSION FROM THE WRITER'S UNION, WHICH WERE SIMILAR TO BIERMANN'S APPEARANCE AT A CHURCH CONCERT IN PRENZLAU IN SEPTEMBER. AS FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINED, THERE WERE NO OFFICIAL RECRIMINATIONS AGAINST KUNZE FOR THESE APPEARANCES. KUNZE WAS NOT AMONG THE SIGNERS OF THE PRO-BIERMANN PETITION ASKING THE SED TO RECONSIDER STRIPPING BIERMANN OF HIS GDR CITIZENSHIP WHILE ON A CONCERT TOUR OF THE FRG.

5. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THIS IS FIRST OCCASION SINCE THE BIERMANN OUSTER THAT A GDR CULTURAL FIGURE HAS REQUESTED, AND BEEN ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE GDR. IT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF SOME FLEXIBILITY IN THE GDR'S HANDLING OF THE INTERNAL CULTURAL SITUATION IN THE PAST 2 MONTHS AND AN INDICATION THAT SOME CRITICAL WRITERS LIKE KUNZE FEEL SAFE IN GOING ABROAD WITHOUT

FEAR OF BEING STRIPPED OF GDR CITIZENSHIP WHILE
PUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, LIKE BIERMANN WAS. THE
POSSIBLITIY EXISTS THAT KUNZE COULD ASK TO STAY IN
AUSTRIA OR USE THE OCCASION TO PROCEED TO THE FRG.
IF, AS ANTICIPATED, HE RETURNS TO THE GDR, IT CAN BE
INTERPRETED AS A SIGNAL THAT TH BIERMANN EXPULSION
WAS A ONE-TIME ACTION AND IS NOT INTEDNDED TO BE
APPLIED TO OTHER WRITERS WHO ARE EITHER CRITICAL OF THE
REGIME AND/OR WHO ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES WITH BIERMANN
LAST NOVEMBER, AND WHO DO NOT USE THEIR PRESENCE
IN THE WEST, PARTICULARLY THE FRG, TO OPENLY CRITICIZE
THE GDR.

6. IN VIEW OF THE RECENT, STRONG STATEMENTS BY
AUSTRIAN PREMIER KREISKY IN SUPPORT OF INTELLECTUAL
FREEDOM AND THE CHARTA 77 DISSIDENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA,
THE GDR ACTION IN ALLOWING KUNZE TO VISIT SALZBURG
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CAN ALSO BE SEEN AS A DESIRE NEGATIVELY IN AUSTRIA
AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD, AS HAPPENED IN THE BIERMANN
CASE. POLANSKY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WRITERS, HONOR AWARDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BERLIN05266
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770047-1043
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770256/aaaabwyq.tel
Line Count: 142
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 725f74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BERLIN 7136
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3358291
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GDR AUTHOR REINER KUNZE IN AUSTRIA TO RECEIVE LITERARY PRIZE
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, AWRD, GC, AU, (KUNZE, REINER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/725f74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009